Your Start

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by 305unreal

Summary

Hannibal wants to learn how Will got his start

Notes

> Pugbug73: thanks for commenting! this au has continued

There's something oddly soothing in the way Will speaks and walks about his property. When Hannibal had shown up, he was unsure what to expect; witnessing the young man walk from a distanced shed to the two-story farmhouse with a barrel in one hand and a long slab of meat hefted over his shoulder was not in the cards. He's calm and inviting when he catches the serial killer's eyes, nodding to the meal in Hannibal's hands. He silently directs him to the quaint countertop.

"What have you cooked?"

"Gnocchi stuffed with medulla oblongata with a fra diavolo sauce."

Will hums pleasantly. They set the modest table in the nook of the kitchen, next to a small, curtained window. The host fills their wine glasses with lemonade and lights a single candle to denote the possibility of romance between the dark individuals. There's an honest sense of curiosity present in Will's eyes as he watches Hannibal carve into the brain on his plate. The therapist notices the stare but chooses not to break the silence first.

"How did you get your start?"

Will is the first to ask, and there's a lull of tension, but Will doesn't appear too concerned. He sips his lemonade and turns his attention to the brain, though his eyes keep wandering to his guest. The question is personal and very rude, but Hannibal finds that he doesn't mind very much. He explains his past, how he and his sister were kidnapped when he was fifteen and she was twelve, how their captors starved him and killed her, and how their captors fed Mischa to him.

"And you avenged her," Will surmises, not looking too bothered by the events. "Killed her captors and ate them."

"All but one," he answers cryptically. "You've glossed over *your* past. Professor Graham. What is your true story?"

Will blanches as though telling the story hadn't crossed his mind. There's another tension-rolling silence, and Hannibal worries about pressing. The younger man has stopped eating, the wine glass halfway to his mouth, and he seems lost in thought.

Jasper Graham and Rebecca Du Maurier were lovers and the parents of Bedelia, but Jasper wanted nothing to do with children and left her. Six years later, Jasper married another woman and became the father of William. He was left responsible for raising his son after his wife checked herself out of the hospital and ran away with her lover. Jasper had no idea how to be a parent, but he took William home.

"I told you how my dad raised me until I was nine."

It isn't a question, but Hannibal nods anyway.

"Because my mom's lover helped her escape the hospital and her marriage after I was born."

Over the course of five years, Jasper taught William the finer things in life: fishing, reading, and tracking. At age six, William was gifted his first shotgun and taken on a weekend hunt at an old cabin in the Virginia woods. The cabin has long been in the Graham family name. Rather than hunt gators, bears, or even elk, Jasper taught him to track campers. They would climb trees or hide around caves and other areas shrouded in shadows, watching the surrounding campers. If an especially arrogant or negligent camper were to go astray from the trail, they would be fair game.

Will sighs slowly. "My dad, Jasper was his name, tried what he could. He taught me to fish before anything else. He taught me reading and tracking after that. I needed t know what to do when he wasn't around. We went on our first hunting trip together when I was six. He gave me my first shotgun, and this farmhouse here… it's on the same property as the family cabin. It was also the first time I realized what we'd been eating. Not gators or elk, or any of those. I learned the Animal Code, and we hunted campers."

Hannibal hums quietly, his eyes intense as they fixate on the younger man. Will finishes his wine glass's journey, taking a long sip of the lemonade before he continues.

Jasper would teach Will where to hit their victim to paralyze them, limiting screams and innocent casualties. They would string up their catch in the barn, bleed them, and hack the meats of their bodies into neatly packaged bags. The rest of the body would be stored in freezers hidden below the ground. Most of the meats could be cooked and served for many meals to come. Damaged organs were thrown out for the wildlife to consume and likely die.

"Jasper taught me how to paralyze my victim, how to properly catch and hack. We had freezers hidden underground for the rest of the bodies," Will raises an eyebrow. "I'm sure you understand that. You have a murder basement, don't you?"

"Very astute, William."

He nods, a small smile appearing. "Anything damaged would be sent back into the wild."

By age nine, the rush of a fresh kill was practically orgasmic, and Will opted to share a cigarette with his old man. Jasper would have it no other way. They hunted mostly in Louisiana, but they moved through Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia as well. At this point, they lived in an RV so they could travel with ease. If any hitchhikers were ungrateful for a ride, they became a meal. One man journeying from Alabama to Virginia was especially grateful when he saw that Jasper had a young boy traveling with him. He got very friendly with the preteen, to the point that Will grew uncomfortable.

Will takes another bite, savouring the taste before he continues his story.

"When I was nine, I tried cigarettes. The nicotine calmed the rush I felt after a fresh kill. Jasper and I lived in an RV, traveling through the southern states. We picked up hitchhikers and people stranded on the side of the road, and if anyone was ungrateful for or refused our help, they became another meal. We'd usually toss the bodies off overpasses or leave them at truck stops."

Hannibal tries unsuccessfully to hold back a snort of some sort. It isn't quite so undignified, and his lemonade barely bubbles.

“But there was this one man who was *really* friendly. Especially toward me.”

“But you were only nine,” Hannibal reiterates, his hand clenching around his knife.

- *“Can we kill him, Dad? I think he’s gonna do something.”*
- *“We just killed a hiker two days ago, Boy. Give it time.”*
- *“But I don’t like the way he looks at me.”*
- *“Then look away.”*

Jasper was no help, so the man stayed in the RV. One night, after Jasper was piss drunk and sleeping it off up front, the hitchhiker strayed into Will’s bed, climbing over his thin body. The boy had anticipated something to happen but, as he made his move with a hunting knife, the man slipped a paralytic via syringe into Will’s nape. The drug worked fast, and Will’s body involuntarily went limp. He could see, hear, and feel everything – the readjustments, the buckle unfastening, the clothes removal; the heavy, protruding invader thrusting in and out of his anus – but he could do nothing about it. He was forced to let it happen.

Will nods solemnly. “I told Jasper about it, but he didn’t help. The hitchhiker found one of the paralytics. It was a dirty needle, one from a few days ago that wasn’t completely used. And he…” his voice hiccups. “He raped me, and I couldn’t do a damn thing about it.”

“Where was your father?”

“Piss drunk.”

The following morning, the man was gone, and Jasper didn’t care that his son was violated. When he learned what had transpired, he stopped at nearby clinics and pharmacies for paralytic substances. Will assumed they were for self-defense; a manner to fight against others who wanted Will for their selfish reasons. A way to lure obnoxious bastards and kill them for their meat. Will thought it was a great plan. Until he learned his father’s true intentions: charging those obnoxious bastards fifty dollars for use of a syringe and a night in the RV fucking the kid senseless.

He takes a few minutes to control his breathing. “The hiker was gone the next day, and I told Jasper what happened, but he didn’t give a shit. He bought more paralytics, and I thought they were to help us, but…”

“William,” Hannibal’s voice is deep and worried, dashed in anger. “Did he allow others to sexually abuse you?”

“Not just allow,” he scoffs. “Jasper charged those bastards fifty bucks to paralyze and fuck me in the RV.”

Hannibal growls at the information, and Will smiles slightly at the protective vibes. He takes another sip of the lemonade.

At age eleven, Rebecca Du Maurier approached Jasper, and Will met his seventeen-year-old half-sister Dell. The teenager was emotionally distant, but Will was hostile enough to see through her shield. While Will’s dad simply pulled him from school and forced him on the road, Dell’s mom sent her away to private academies so she would need to parent.

“It’s unrelated, but Jasper didn’t have school papers for me, so about a week later, I was taken from him by a truant officer and a social worker. I was placed with the other family who didn’t understand me. As I told you before, I managed to gain their trust enough to drug them and hold them captive so I could go find Jasper.”

“Forgive how this may sound William, but why would you wish to return to that vile man?”

“To exact revenge. I couldn’t let him get away with it. With me gone, he didn’t have any responsibilities. I went straight to the cabin and waited.”

“Was it immediate, or did he suffer?”

“Patience, Hannibal,” Will smiles softly. “In my absence, Jasper had found love. His first love. And I learned that I wasn’t alone. That I had an older half-sister. Her name was Dell,

and she was seventeen. Older than me by six years and emotionally distant, but I knew how to get under her skin. She'd lived all of her life from one private academy to the next."

"Is Dell still around?" Hannibal asks tentatively.

Will smiles gently. "Yes. We share a lot with one another."

"I'm glad."

- *"I hate your mom."*
- *"I dislike your father."*
- *"What's to do about that?"*
- *"We could kill them… but we'd be the immediate suspects."*
- *Will raised an unimpressed eyebrow. "Not if we staged it."*
- *"Like an accident?" She asked, intrigued yet anxious.*
- *"Or an animal attack," he nodded. "I'm very good with animals."*

"She was very blatant about how she felt about any given thing or person. We were left alone a lot while Jasper and Becca – her mom – were on the road. We had a few conversations about how we could rid ourselves of their presence for good."

In retrospect, Dell thought it was all talk. She had no idea what Will grew up with. She didn't know the dark-minded preteen was a cold-blooded tracker, hunter, and killer. He didn't pick up on her trepidation any more than she picked up on his darkness. He injected them with the same paralytics that Jasper's been hoarding for years. Instead of using a sharp hunting knife, Will procured a thick, jagged, double-edged blade. Perfect for simulating a savage animal attack. The bodies were made to look as though they were attacked on the edge of the property and dragged into the woods. Organs were ripped from the body, though Will was careful not to touch the heart or the brainstem of either victim. Dell watched, aghast but compelled, and feared for her own life.

"Did they suffer?" He can't help but ask again.

“I taught Dell to track and hunt. She paralyzed Jasper, and I injected Becca. But that’s when Dell realized that I wasn’t all talk.”

“She thought you only intended to trap them?” Hannibal guesses.

Will nods. “I had this beautiful double-edged blade. It cut into flesh so effortlessly, leaving a bloody mess behind. I ripped through their organs so we could eat on the road, shattering what I could along the way. But I steered clear of their hearts and brainstems.”

“You kept them alive throughout the ordeal,” Hannibal sighs excitedly. “What about Dell?”

“She did what I asked of her.”

- *“This is our secret now,” Will told her as he packaged the meat from their untrusted guardians. “You can never tell another living soul.”*
- *“Who would I tell?” Dell retorted. “Who would believe me?”*
- *“You won’t tell anyone, sister dear,” he insisted in a more hardened tone. “Not even your diary. Or I will come after you. Am I lying?”*
- *“No,” she shook her head in defeat. “I won’t tell anyone.”*

Hannibal nods slowly, taking another bite, knowing Will isn’t finished.

“It became our secret. If she were to ever say anything, she would only implicate herself, and I wouldn’t hesitate to bring her down with me.”

He nodded and looked at the two containers of the brain. It wasn’t all of the brains; just pieces that weren’t necessary for the adults to understand the cruelty and pain of their punishment. They left the bodies in a prime spot for predatory creatures like bears and wolves to find. They trekked back to the RV with their finds, and Dell was delegated to drive to Virginia. In the meantime, Will took over in the kitchen. He fixed meals from the brains and fed them to his sister.

“I find it interesting that you brought brain,” Will says. “I took pieces of Jasper and Becca’s brains with us. It was the first that I fed Dell. She took over driving, and I took over cooking. It took her some time, but she slowly got used to the family business. We never offered ourselves to anyone. We just looked after each other. We still do.”

“Thank you for sharing, William.”

He hums in response, reaching across the table to cover Hannibal’s fist; it’s still closed around the knife, though it loosens under Will’s touch.

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